



John Elias Baldacci
Governor

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF HEALTH ENGINEERING
11 STATE HOUSE STATION
Office: 161 Capitol Street
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0011

**FREQUENTLY ASKED RADON IN AIR QUESTIONS:
REAL ESTATE TESTING GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**
(Should be followed if the house is for sale or soon will be)
(Revised 10/21/03)

Q: Who can do the test?

A: The Maine Radon Registration Act (22 MRSA §771 et seq.) says a Maine registered radon tester must conduct the test if the home is or soon will be for sale. **This is true for radon in water as well. It is illegal for a Realtor, home seller, or home buyer to do a radon in air or a radon in water test when the home is for sale!**

Current listings of registered testers are available from the Radiation Control Program website at www.maineradiationcontrol.org, then click on the Radon Section link; or by calling 1-800-232-0842. Most registered testers are also Home Inspectors.

Q: Where do I get the test kit?

A: The Maine registered radon tester will bring and use a radon test kit they are familiar with. You will not need to get a test kit on your own. The test kit used by the registered radon tester must be from a Maine registered radon laboratory, unless the home inspector uses a continuous radon monitor. If you want to make sure your registered tester used a test kit from a registered laboratory, current listings of registered labs are available from the Radiation Control Program website at www.maineradiationcontrol.org, then click on the Radon Section link; or by calling 1-800-232-0842.

Q: How is a radon test done?

A: The registered tester has been trained in proper testing protocols. These are the main things they will consider or do when setting a test kit.

Radon in air tests during Real Estate transactions must use at least **two short-term test kits OR one continuous monitor**.

-If your registered tester uses two test kits, they will be set four inches apart and are used at the same time. The results of both tests will be reported to you, along with the average and recommendations.

-If your registered tester uses a continuous monitor, the monitor must take and report hourly radon measurements. The average result will be reported to you, along with the hourly measurements and recommendations.

-For ANY Real Estate radon test, **the test must be at least 48 hours**, and not more than 90 days long.

-**Doors and windows in the entire house must be closed 12 hours before the test begins, and must stay closed during the entire test.** The only exception is the few seconds when people are entering or leaving the home. Having windows or doors open too long can cause **higher or lower** results.

-Exhaust fans that are not part of an approved radon mitigation system also need to be turned off before and during the test. During summer, air conditioners can be operated on re-circulate mode only. No fresh air.

-DO NOT cover sump holes, fill cracks, etc. before or during a test. Doing any of these can be considered fraud, and makes the radon test not valid. Contact the Radiation Control Program at 1-800-232-0842 for more information.

Q: Where does the test kit go?

A: The test should be in the **lowest useable** part of the house, usually the basement. A basement is useable if it has 6 feet of clearance, has stone, cinderblock, or poured concrete walls, and a mostly dry floor. In Maine, dirt floored basements with fieldstone walls are frequently used for workshops, exercise, or play. Just because the current owner does not use the basement doesn't mean a future owner won't.

- The kit needs to be **in an open area**, and **between 20 inches and eight feet off the floor**.
- The kit needs **at least four inches of space** around the sides and top.
- Keep the kit at least **a foot away from outside walls**, and **three feet away from any doors and windows**
- keep the kit **out of drafts and direct sunlight**, and **away from heat sources**.
- Do not test during stormy or windy days!!!** These weather conditions can influence test results.

Q: What do my results mean?

A: First, you need to know that there is **no 'safe' level** of radon. The action level of 4 pci/l was set because the radon level in all homes can be reduced to below this number. Most homes can have the radon level dropped to near 1 pci/l. Also, no home will ever have 'no radon' because there is radon everywhere-even out doors. The amount of radon outdoors is about one half of a pci/l (0.5 pci/l). So what do you do?

For low test results (**below 2.0 pci/l**), no further action is necessary. Consider re-testing in about 5 years, or if the house is modified (new furnace, ventilation system, addition, etc.). Changes such as these, or earthquakes, blasting nearby, or changes in the water table can change radon levels in a house.

For moderate test results (**between 2.0 and 4.0 pci/l**), remember that 4 pci/l is not 'safe'. Consider mitigation, particularly if your results are near 4 pci/l. Trying to reduce radon levels already below 4 pci/l is not as easy as reducing levels of 4 pci/l or over. Otherwise, consider re-testing in about 5 years, or if the house is modified (new furnace, ventilation system, addition, etc.).

If the test results are **4.0 pci/l or over**, you should lower the radon levels. A current list of Maine registered mitigation contractors is available from the Radiation Control Program website at www.maineradiationcontrol.org, then click on the Radon Section link; or by calling 1-800-232-0842

If one side-by-side test kit result is under 4 pci/l and the other is over 4 pci/l, the test is valid when the higher result is not more than double the lower. Average the two results and follow the above recommendations.

- When one side-by-side test kit result is less than 4 pci/l and the other is over 4 pci/l and more than double the lower result, there is a problem. The test needs to be redone.

Q: What do I do if mitigation is needed?

A: The Maine Radon Registration Act (22 MRSA §771 et seq.) says a Maine registered radon mitigator must install the mitigation system if the house is for sale. **This is true for radon in water as well.** For about \$1,200 the mitigator can install pipes that remove radon from under the house, called a sub-slab depressurization system. This type of system is guaranteed to reduce radon levels to below 4 pci/l, and is the most durable, reliable, and least costly radon removal method. **Mitigating radon in water problems is done differently, and is more costly.**

A current list of Maine registered mitigation contractors is available from the Radiation Control Program website at www.maineradiationcontrol.org, then click on the Radon Section link; or by calling 1-800-232-0842

Q: Where can I get more information on radon, radon testing, or radon mitigation?

A: Visit the Radiation Control Program website at www.maineradiationcontrol.org, then click on the Radon Section link; or call the Radon/IAQ Section at 1-800-232-0842 between 8 AM and 5 PM. After hours, call that number and leave a message with your name, address, phone number (from 8 to 5), and your question. Your call will be returned, and information to help you will be mailed. We have many radon handouts, including general information; information on testing, and information on fixing radon problems.

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